

*a*  
*Cont*

- a) providing a purified proteolytic HCV polypeptide according to any one of claims 27-35;
- b) contacting said purified proteolytic HCV polypeptide with a candidate inhibitory compound in the presence of said peptide substrate; and
- c) measuring the inhibition of the proteolytic activity of said purified proteolytic hepatitis C virus polypeptide.

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**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request entry of this preliminary amendment prior to prosecution. Following entry of this amendment, claims 27-36 will be pending in this case.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 223002010004. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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